

BILLESDON COPLOW,
A POEM,
DESCRIPTIVE OF
A REMARKABLE DAY'S SPORT
IN
LEICESTERSHIRE,

On Monday, February 24th, 1800,

BY THE REV. ROBERT LOWTH,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A brief Memoir of the Author.



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY T. GRIFFITHS,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

1831.

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SIXPENCE







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BILLESDON COPLOW will only cease to interest when the grass shall grow in winter in the streets of Melton Mowbray.—*Sporting Magazine.*

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BILLISDON COPYLOW

A POEM

A REMARKABLE DAY'S SPORT

THE FIRST PART

OF THE HISTORY OF THE

THE FOX HUNTERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

BY THE REV. ROBERT FOWLER

THE SECOND PART

OF THE HISTORY OF THE FOX HUNTERS

OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

IN THREE VOLUMES

LONDON

BILLISDON COPYLOW

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, 10, BROOK STREET.



Ye vig'rous youths, by smiling Fortune blest
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,
Heap'd copious by your wise forefathers' care.

TO

THE FOX-HUNTERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM,

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF A RUN WITH THE

QUORNDON HOUNDS

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A FRIEND,

AND ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION,

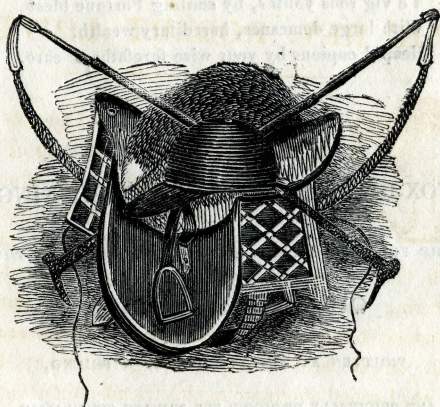
BY ROBERT LOWTH,

INTITLED

BILLESDON COPLOW,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

Hyde Park Corner,
Dec. 1830.



BY ROBERT FOWTH,

HILLISDON COPLOW,



BRIEF MEMOIR
OF
THE REV. ROBERT LOWTH.



HE author of BILLESDON COPLOW (son of the learned Dr. Lowth,^a Bishop of London) received the rudiments of his education at Winchester, and was early distinguished for his classical attainments at Christ Church, Oxford, of which college he was a student.

During his sojourn at the University he purchased a pony, which lived to the great age of *thirty-seven* years. Of this pony he wrote a very amusing biography, in verse, which was handed about among his friends, but never printed. Mr. L. was a resident Member of Christ Church when Bibury races were instituted, and was one of the original Members of that Club, riding for the first Welter Stakes there against Lord Sackville (now Duke of Dorset), and his brother George Germaine, and others. When he took up his residence in Hampshire, he became a member of the "Hampshire Hunt" Club; and won the Hunt Cup at Winchester, with a mare by Gohanna, the very picture of the old horse. He had another winner of that Cup in his stables, Zephyr

^a This ornament to the Church of England died at Fulham, November 3d, 1787, æt. 77.

by Hyacinthus; and a clever little bay horse called Harlequin, which he purchased after winning the Farmers' Cup on Soberton Downs, for the Hambledon Hunt races.

It was on a visit to Melton, when Mr. Meynell^a hunted the Quorn country, that Mr. L. was an eye-witness of the celebrated run from Billesdon Coplow. Some of the party who, perhaps, saw the *least* of that run, had published a very

^a Descended from an ancient family in Derbyshire. In the early part of his life, Mr. Meynell had a seat in the British Senate; but he returned thence to gratify a mind formed by nature for very different pursuits—the sports of the field.

Mr. Meynell was long considered as the first fox-hunter in the kingdom; he purchased a house at Quorndon of Earl Ferrers, and which, after a residence of nearly fifty years, on the illness of his eldest son, who died May 17th, 1800, aged 41, he disposed of to the Earl of Sefton.

In the year 1791, Mr. Meynell gave a splendid treat to a numerous party of nobility and gentry at Quorndon Hall. On the first day of hunting, his distinguished visitors attended him to covert near Stanford in Nottinghamshire, where there was an assembly of about 300 horsemen, and several ladies in carriages; among whom were the Duchess of Rutland, Marchioness of Salisbury, Countess of Essex, Countess Talbot, Countess of Sefton; the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earls of Essex, Talbot, Stair, and Winchelsea; the Dukes of Bedford, Devonshire, and Grafton; with many others of rank and fashion. These noble visitors were his guests for about ten days; and the neighbourhood of Quorndon afforded peace and pleasure to the brilliant circle.

In his method of managing a subscription pack Mr. Meynell left no equal behind him. He had not only to humour but contend with many dashing young men of family and fortune who were continually racing against each other and riding before the hounds; by the force of his ridicule, and the pleasantry of his observations upon *such* a system of hunting; they were brought to order, and acknow-

garbled account of the affair. At the request of a friend (the Hon. G. Germaine) he sat down one evening to pen and ink, and the next morning the true version of the affair appeared in verse. For originality, and the very happy way the various horses and riders are hit off to the life, it is a perfect poem in its way, and has served as a model for the Epwell Hunt, written by Mr. E. Goulburn, and others of the same kind.

Many a valuable friend has been made and found by the covert side, or by riding a race together. In proof of this position, it may be stated that two of Mr. L.'s best and warmest friends through life, who were always with him to the last,

“When the base fawning crowd had bid farewell,”

were two of his ancient antagonists at Bibury, the Duke of Dorset and Lord Oxford. His Grace would ride quietly down to Chiswick to take a family dinner with his old friend *Bob* (so he always called him); and, though “Master of the Horse,” unattended with the pomp of Royal liveries, carriages, &c. &c.

“For L. and he despised the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and great.”

ledged their error. On two of the company who were riding *before* the hounds, he remarked, “the hounds were *following* the gentlemen, who very kindly were gone *forward* to *see* what the fox was about.”

Mr. MEYNELL died at Bradley, Derbyshire, in December 1808, in his seventy-fourth year, sincerely lamented by all who had witnessed his exertions in the field for their amusement, and still more painfully regretted by those with whom he was connected by ties which bind the relation or the friend. His unbounded liberality to the poor will be long, very long remembered. Such, reader, was HUGO MEYNELL.

"An instance of how little he valued trouble or inconvenience where he could oblige others," says a very amusing writer in the Sporting Magazine, "occurred during my being snowed up at his house for the Christmas vacation. We were sitting round the fire after dinner, when one of his daughters observed it was the Winchester ball night, and what a pleasant thing it would be if some *Genii* could transport us all that night to the ball by magic. To our astonishment, and in spite of all opposition, the coach and four horses were brought to the door. When he had made his daughters put on their ball dresses, and notwithstanding a fearful cold night, and heavy snow on the ground, he drove us to Winchester, twelve miles, and back again when the ball was over. Few modern coachmen would ever dream of such a thing. *"Alas! poor Yorick!"*

The following particulars regarding the last moments and death of Mr. Lowth, are gleaned from the very amusing work of Mr. Colman, called "Random Records." It will be seen that they were both members of Christ Church. Speaking of his early friend, Mr. C. says, "from the period of my quitting Oxford in 1781 till 1822, a considerable lapse of time, and, on my part (as far as it concerned my regard for Lowth,) *hiatus valde defendus!* I had no communication with him, personal or epistolary. In the last-mentioned year, however, I received a letter from him, which, from its unaffected and lively style proved that age had not altered the good nature, nor impaired the pleasantry which formerly made him so popular and beloved among the junior members of our college. I answered it immediately, telling my old friend how much he had gratified me, and how happy I should be in attending him, on any early day most conve-

nient to himself. In a few days after I heard from him again, as follows:—

‘Grove House, Chiswick, 9 A. M.
‘August 17th.

‘DEAR COLMAN,

‘*Surgere diluculo saluberrimum est*;—but all general rules having their exceptions, so in my case of turning out on Wednesday morning.—On seeing, from my up two pair-of-stairs bedroom, two active Citizens in full march for a grove of Orleans plum-trees at the bottom of the Park, I forthwith added my grey camlet jacket and trowsers to my flannel drawers and waistcoat, and finding my active Citizen Gardener already up, we soon reached the scene of action;—but, alas! not only the birds were flown, but my plums were diminished, though not twenty minutes from the skirmishers’ forced march. So, being up,—a most cogent argument,—I thought I could not do better than work my passage back a different route, which lay through an ozier bed to the river, glittering with all the gems of pearly dew, through which, being some acres of ground, I, of course, got my feet as wet as heart could wish.—To cut the story short:—by changing cold water, or rather water-drenched worsted, for a hot foot-tub, and ditto basin of tea, I thought to bully the thing off,—but it was not so to be bullied by a middle-aged gentleman; so, after dinner, I retired up stairs to bed; and to make some amends for my “*diluculo*” expedition, have never been down stairs since. Having no personal interest with the dinner-bell, and living *à la Sangrado*, has so reduced my strength, that I dread the journey up and down stairs again. But for this “*interpoculum et labra*,” it was my intention to have made you my first *poste restante*—with perhaps a walk down the old

Avenue,^a—in my way to town, that identical day; and still hoping to accomplish three miles and back, I have hoped from day to day: but I cannot get in travelling condition even for so short a journey—Therefore, I hope you will send me word by my new Yorkshire groom lad, that you will take pot-luck with me next Sunday, as the most likely day for you to suburbize. You will meet nobody but ourselves, and perhaps, Lord Oxford, who, having been laid up this week past, may not be able to come.

‘No time for this sheet, as the carriage is at the door, behind which Yorkshire is to have a cast to Hammer-smith Pump, whence he foots it to you, and returns with your answer forthwith;—but should you not be at Fulham Lodge, I have desired that this may be forwarded to you by the first twopenny—in hopes of its still reaching you in time for Sunday, at six or half past six o’clock dinner.

‘Thank God, as I often have, that I am not “set on a pinnacle, to cast myself down,” as poor Lord Londonderry has done! on which subject, *nunc, et semper, prescribere longum est*,

‘Yours, Dear Colman, very truly,

‘ROBERT LOWTH.’

“From the playfulness of this letter, it then appeared to me that my friend had been labouring under no very for-

^a Leading to the Bishop of London’s palace, at Fulham. Mr. Colman had reminded his friend of being driven down the “Avenue,” when under-graduates, at the commencement of the long vacation in 1781, on their return from Oxford. He adds, “whenever I was at this place [i. e. Fulham], the ‘Avenue’ and the ‘Bishop’s Walk’ by the river side were my favourite morning and evening lounge.”

midable, though an acute attack, brought on by accident; and that four and twenty hours more rest would considerably advance his convalescence;—I, therefore, answered that I anticipated great pleasure from dining with him. But I have since had reason (melancholy reason) to reflect, that, while giving this cheerful account of himself, he was still in bed, at least in his bed-room,—reduced in strength, “and dreading the journey down stairs, and up again:” that this was inconsistent with his inviting me to dinner on the Sunday, *the very next day*;—and that he was much too sanguine, and, perhaps, fevered in no trifling degree, when he wrote to me.

“Early next morning, his daughter, Miss F. Lowth, favoured me with a few lines, informing me that her father, since the foregoing day, had become extremely unwell; that bleeding and cupping had been prescribed; the most perfect quiet enjoined; and that, of course, our purposed party must be deferred. I began now to be seriously apprehensive for him, and the *inter poculum et labra*, which he had so sportively quoted only the day preceding, came over my mind like the raven’s croak upon the ear of Superstition. On the third day I received a most painful confirmation of all my fears!

“Seldom have I felt the trite ethics on the fragility of human hopes, the evanescence of life’s joys, and of life itself, more bitterly illustrated than by this affecting occurrence.

“A fortnight had not gone by, since, in the enjoyment of health, and gaiety of spirit, he had sought me out, to court a renewal of our intimacy;—and, on the evening of the very day appointed for our meeting, after one and forty years of separation,—nay, at the very hour when I had pictured to myself our sitting at his hospitable board, with his wife, and his “eleven olive branches,” smiling around

us,—listening to our talk of former times, and happy to see us happy ;—even at that impending hour of social Reason's happiness, did the awful decrees of Heaven snatch him from friendship, from domestic love, and from this world for ever !

“I continued at Fulham Lodge, which is nearer, in a direct line, to the Church, than to the Bishop's Palace and the “*Old Avenue*.”—On Monday the adjacent steeple gave early notice of the approaching funeral ;—Religion and sorrow mingled within me, while the slow and mournful tolling of the bell smote upon my heart.—Selfish feelings, too, (though secondary) might, now and then obtrude, for they are implanted in our nature ;—my departed friend was about my own age ; we had entered the field nearly at the same time ; we had fought, indeed, our chief battles asunder,—but, in our younger days, he had been my comrade, close to me in the ranks ;—he had fallen, and my own turn might speedily follow. My walk, next morning, was to the sepulchre of the Lowths,—to indulge in the mournful satisfaction of viewing the depository of my poor friend's remains.—It stands in the church-yard, a few paces from the eastern end of the ancient church at Fulham. The surrounding earth, trampled by recent footsteps, and a slab of marble which had been evidently taken out, and replaced, in the side of the tomb, too plainly presented traces of those rites which had been performed on the previous day. For several mornings I repeated my walk thither ;—and no summer has, since, glided away (except the last, when my sojournment at Fulham was suspended) without my visiting the spot, and heaving a sigh to the memory of

ROBERT LOWTH !”

BILLESDON COPLOW.

*“Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.”*



WITH the wind at north-east, forbiddingly keen,
The Coplow of Billesdon ne'er witness'd, I ween,
Two hundred such horses and men, at a burst,
All determin'd to ride—each resolv'd to be first.

But to get a good start over eager and jealous,
Two-thirds, at the least, of these very fine fellows,
So crowded, and hustled, and jostled, and cross'd,
That they rode the wrong way, and at starting were lost.

In spite of th' unpromising state of the weather,
Away broke the fox, and the hounds close together :
A burst up to Tilton so brilliantly ran
Was scarce ever seen in the mem'ry of man.

What hounds guided scent, or which led the way,
Your bard—to their names quite a stranger—can't say ;
Tho' their names had he known, he is free to confess,
His horse could not shew him at such a death-pace.

VILLIERS, CHOLMONDELEY, and FORESTER, made such sharp play,
Not omitting GERMAINE, never seen till to-day :
Had you judg'd of these four by the trim of their pace,
At Bib'ry you'd thought they'd been riding a race.
But these hounds with a scent—how they dash and they fling
To o'er ride them is quite the impossible thing !
Disdaining to hang in the wood—thro' he raced,
And the open for Skeffington gallantly faced,

Where headed, and foil'd, his first point he forsook,
 And merrily led them a dance o'er the brook.
 Pass'd Galby and Norton, Great Stretton and Small,
 Right onward still sweeping to old Stretton Hall:
 Where two minutes' check serv'd to shew, at one ken,
 The extent of the havoc 'mongst horses and men.
 Such sighing, such sobbing, such trotting, such walking—
 Such reeling, such halting, of fences such baulking—
 Such a smoke in the gaps, such comparing of notes—
 Such quizzing each other's daub'd breeches and coats:
 Here a man walk'd afoot, who his horse had half kill'd,
 There you met with a steed who his rider had spill'd:
 In short, such dilemmas, such scrapes, such distress,
 One fox ne'er occasioned, the knowing confess.
 But, alas! the dilemmas had scarcely began,
 On for Wigston and Ayleston he resolute ran,
 Where a few of the stoutest now slacken'd and panted,
 And many were seen irretrievably planted.
 The high road to Leicester the scoundrel then cross'd,
 As *Tell-Tale*^a and *Beaufremont*^b found to their cost;
 And VILLIERS esteem'd it a serious bore
 That no longer could *Shuttlecock*^c fly as before.
 Even *Joe Miller's*^d spirit of fun was so broke,
 That he ceased to consider the run as a joke.
 Then streaming away, o'er the river he splash'd—
 GERMAINE, close at hand, off the bank, *Melon*^e dash'd.
 Why the *Dun* prov'd so stout, in a scamper so wild,
 Till now he had only been rode by a CHILD.^f

^a Mr. Forester's horse.

^d Mr. Musters's horse.

^b Mr. Maddocks's horse.

^e Mr. Germaine's horse.

^c Lord Villiers's horse.

^f Formerly the property of Mr. Child, to whom this hunt is perhaps originally indebted for the present spirited style of riding to hounds.

After him plung'd *Joe Miller* with *MUSTERS* so slim,
 Who twice sank, and nearly paid dear for his whim,
 Not reflecting that all water melons must swim.
 Well sous'd by their dip, on they brush'd o'er the bottom,
 With liquor on board enough to besot 'em:
 But the villain no longer at all at a loss,
 Stretch'd away like a devil for *Enderby Gorse*:
 Where meeting with many a brother and cousin,
 Who knew how to dance a good hay in the furzen,
JACK RAVEN^a at length, coming up on a hack,
 Whom a farmer had lent him—whipp'd off the game pack.
 Running sulky, old *Loadstone*^b the stream would not swim,
 No longer sport proving a magnet to him.

Of mistakes, and mishaps, and what each man befel,
 Would the Muse could with justice poetical tell!
BOB GROSVENOR on *Plush*^c—tho' determin'd to ride—
 Lost, at first, a good start, and was soon set aside;
 Tho' he charg'd hill and dale, not to lose this rare chase,
 On Velvet—*Plush* could not get footing, alas!

To Tilton sail'd bravely Sir *WHEELER O'CUFF*,
 Where neglecting, thro' hurry, to keep a good luff,
 To leeward he drifts—how provoking a case!
 And was forc'd, tho' reluctant, to give up the chase.

As making his way to the pack's not his forte,
Sir LAWLEY^d as usual, lost half of the sport.
 But then the profess'd philosophical creed,
 That—"all's for the best"—of Master *CANDIDE*,
 If not comfort Sir R. reconcile may at least;
 For, on *this* supposition, *his* sport is the best.

^a The name of the huntsman.

^b The huntsman's horse.

^c Mr. Robert Grosvenor's horse.

^d Sir Robert Lawley—not unusually in the brief dialect of Melton,
 called Sir Lawley.

ORBY HUNTER, who seem'd to be hunting his fate,
Got falls, to the tune of no fewer than eight.

Basan's King ^a upon *Glimpse*,^b sadly out of condition,
Pull'd up, to avoid of being tir'd the suspicion.
He did right; for OG very soon found,
His worst had he done, he'd have scarce glimps'd a hound.

CHARLES MEYNELL, who lay very well with the hounds,
Till of Stretton he nearly arriv'd at the bounds,
Now discover'd that *Wagoner* ^c rather would creep,
Than exert his great prowess in taking a leap.
But when crossing the turnpike, he read—"Put on here"—
'Twas enough to make any one bluster and swear.
The *Wagoner* feeling familiar the road,
Was resolv'd not to quit it; so stock still he stood.
Yet prithee, dear CHARLES! why rash vows will you make,
Thy leave of old Billesdon ^d to finally take?
Since from Segg's Hill ^e for instance, or perhaps Melton Spinney,
If they go a good pace, you are beat for a guinea!
'Tis money, they say, makes the mare to go kind:
The proverb has vouch'd for this time out of mind.
But tho' of this truth you admit the full force,
It may not hold so good of every horse.
If it did, ELLIS CHARLES need not hustle and hug,
By name, not by nature, his favourite *Slug*.^f
Yet Slug as he is—the whole of this chase,
CHARLES ne'er cou'd have seen, had he gone a snail's space.

^a Mr. Oglander; who, according to the same dialect, goes by the more familiar appellation of Og. ^b Mr. Oglander's horse.

^c Mr. Charles Meynell's horse.

^d He had threatened never again to attempt following the hounds from Billesdon, as no horse could carry his weight up to them in that part of the country.

^e A very different part of the hunt.

^f Mr. Charles Ellis's horse.

Old *Gradus*,^a whose fretting and fuming at first,
 Disqualifies strangely for such a tight burst,
 Ere to Tilton arriv'd ceas'd to pull and to crave,
 And tho' freshish at Stretton, he stepp'd a *pas grave*!
 Where, in turning him over a cramp kind of place,
 He overturn'd GEORGE, whom he threw on his face:
 And on foot to walk home it had sure been his fate,
 But that soon he was caught, and tied up to a gate.

Near Wigston occur'd a most singular joke,
 Captain MILLER averr'd that his leg he had broke,—
 And bemoan'd in most piteous expressions, how hard,
 By so cruel a fracture, to have his sport marr'd.
 In quizzing his friends he felt little remorse,
 To finesse the complete doing up of his horse.
 Had he told a long story of losing a shoe,
 Or of laming his horse, he very well knew
 That the Leicestershire Creed, out this truism worms,
 "Lost shoes and dead beat are synonymous terms."^b
 So a horse must here learn, whatever he does—
 To die game—as at Tyburn—and "die in his shoes."

BETHEL COX, and TOM SMITH, Messieurs BENNETT and HAWKE,
 Their nags all contriv'd to reduce to a walk.

MAYNARD's Lord, who detests competition and strife,
 As well in the chase as in social life,
 Than whom nobody harder has rode in his time,
 But to crane^c now and then, now thinks it no crime—

^a Mr. George Ellis's horse.

^b Indeed so implicit is this article of the Meltonian belief, that many a horse in addition to the misfortune of breaking his hoof from losing his shoe, has laboured likewise under the aforesaid unavoidable imputation, to his everlasting disgrace!

^c The term derives its origin from the necessary extension of neck of such sportsmen as dare to incur the reproach, by venturing "to look before they leap."

That he beat some crack riders most fairly may crow,
For he liv'd to the end, tho' he scarcely knows how!

With snaffle and martingale kept in the rear,
His horse's mouth open half up to his ear,
Mr. WARDLE, who threat'ned great things over night,^a
Beyond Stretton was left in most terrible plight.
Too lean to be press'd, yet egg'd on by compulsion,
No wonder his nag tumbled into convulsion.
Ah! had he but lost a fore shoe, or fell lame,
'Twould only his sport have curtail'd, not his fame!^b

LORRAINE,^c than whom no one his game plays more safe,
Who the last than the first prefers seeing by half—
What with nicking,^d and keeping a constant look out,
Every turn of the scent surely turn'd to account.
The wonderful pluck of his horse surpris'd some,
But he knew they were making point blank for his home.
"Short home" to be brought we all should desire,
Could we manage the trick like the Enderby Squire.^e

Wild SHELLEY^f at starting, all ears and all eyes,
Who to get a good start all experiments tries,
Yet contriv'd it so ill, as to throw out poor Gipsy,^g
Whom he rattled along as if he'd been tipsy,

^a Who was said to have threatened, that he would beat the whole field the next day.

^b For which express purpose, more than *sport*, some are *silly* enough to suppose he hunts; and which, though he did actually succeed in, in *one* instance some seasons ago, he probably never will do again, having threatened it frequently since with as little success. ^c Mr. Lorraine Smith.

^d A term of great reproach, according to the above dialect, to those who are so shabby as to cut across to the hounds, when it is esteemed so much more honourable to follow their very track: by which spirited line of conduct they may be pretty certain of never seeing them at all!

^e Where Mr. Lorraine Smith lives.

^f Sir John Shelley: wild with joy must be here meant; as no one can be personally more serious and sedate: indeed, if the worthy Baronet has a foible it is gravity. ^g Sir John Shelley's mare.

To catch them again; but tho' famous for speed,
 She never could touch ^a them, much less get a lead.^b
 So dishearten'd,^c disjointed, and beat, home he swings,
 Not much unlike a fiddler hung upon strings.

An H. H. ^d who in Leicestershire never had been,
 So of course such a tickler ^e ne'er could have seen,
 Just to see them throw off, on a raw ^f horse was mounted,
 Who a hound had ne'er seen, or a fence had confronted.
 But they found in such style,^g and went off at such score,^h
 That he could not resist the attempt to see more :
 So with scrambling,ⁱ and dashing,^k and one rattling fall,^l
 He saw all the fun, up to Stretton's white Hall.

^a According to the Melton dialect, *overtake*.

^b By which is to be understood, securing the privilege of breaking your neck first; and when you fall, of being rode over by a hundred and ninety-nine of the best fellows upon earth to a dead certainty.

^c Nor can that astonish any one when it is considered what an inestimable privilege he has lost.

^d It is not quite clear whether these initials are meant to apply to a Hampshire hog, or the Hampshire hunt. If to the hog, it does not appear that he saved his bacon.

^e (*Meltonice*) a run so severe, that there is no laughing at it.

^f (*Ibid*) A horse who knew nothing of the business he was going about, or wished to know.

^g *Style* means the best possible manner of doing any thing. As for instance, when a man rides his horse full speed at double posts, and rails, with a *Squire Trap* on the other side, (which is a moderate ditch of about two yards wide, cut on purpose to break gentlemen's necks,) he is then reckoned, at Melton, to have rode it in style; especially if he is caught in the said *Squire Trap*.

^h That kind of pace which perhaps neither you nor your horse ever went before: and if you have not more luck than falls to the share of every first experiment of the kind 'tis ten to one but he falls before he can (what they call) get on his legs; in which case you may rest perfectly satisfied that he must roll over you two or three times at least before he can stop himself.

ⁱ When a horse does not leave above three of his legs behind him, and saves himself by pitching on his head!

^k When a man *charges* a fence (which no other word can express so fully) on the other side of which it is impossible to guess what mischief awaits him, but where his getting a fall is reduced as nearly as possible, to a moral certainty.

^l Rattling fall: Q E D.

There they anchor'd—in plight not a little distressing—
The horse being raw, he of course got a dressing!

That wonderful mare of VANNECK's, who till now,
By no chance ever tir'd^a was taken in tow:
And what's worse, she gave VAN such a devilish jog
In the face with her head, plunging out of a bog,
That with eye black as ink, or as EDWARD's fam'd Prince,
Half blind has he been, and quite deaf ever since.
“But let that not mortify thee, Shackaback”^b—
She only was blown,^c and came a rare hack!

There CRAVEN too stopp'd—whose misfortune, not fault,
His mare unaccountably vex'd with string-halt,^d
And when she had ceas'd thus spasmodic to prance,
Her mouth 'gan to twitch with St. Vitus's dance.^d

But how shall describ'd be the fate of ROSE PRICE?^e
Whose fav'rite white gelding convey'd him so nice
Thro' thick and thro' thin, that he vow'd and protested,^f
No money should part them, as long as life lasted.

^a Which, if other proof were wanting, ascertains beyond any thing else the severity of this chase.

^b A familiar appellation, borrowed from Blue Beard, and bestowed by his friends at Melton on Mr. Vanneck, than which nothing can more thoroughly prove the estimation in which his society is held there; since none but good fellows are ever esteemed, according to the Meltonian principles, worthy of a nick name.

^c His own observation, the merit of which I would scorn to assume; but for the truth of which (at least the latter assertion) I can vouch; as I perfectly agree with him, that I never saw a more complete hack, though he is pleased to call her a hunter.

^d Two nervous affections, in every sense of the word very distressing, especially to a by-stander, who cannot command his risible muscles upon so melancholy an occasion.

^e A gentleman, of whom it has been erroneously said that he never returned from hunting but his horse was sure to be either lame or knocked up.

^f At the covert side his horse had been particularly admired, and a considerable sum of money offered for him.

But the pace^a that effected, which money could not:
 For to part—and in death! was their no distant lot.
 In a fatal blind ditch Carlo Khan's^b powers fail'd,
 Where nor lancet^c nor laudanum^c either avail'd.
 More care^d of a horse than he took could take no man—
 He'd more straw than would serve any lying-in woman.
 Still he died!—yet just how, as nobody knows,
 It may truly be said—He died “under the Rose.”
 At the death of poor Khan, Melton^e feels such remorse,
 That they've christen'd that ditch—“the Vale of White Horse!”
 Thus ended a chase, which for distance and speed
 It's fellow we never have heard of, or read.
 Every species of ground, ev'ry horse does not suit,
 What's a good Country Hunter^f may here prove a brute,

* A complete answer to that impertinent question so vauntingly asked by a favourite poet, when he exclaims in language indeed somewhat bold: “Pray what can do that, which money can not?”

^b The name of Mr. Price's horse.

^c Two excellent restoratives where the patient is not too far gone.

^d Indeed it is only to be lamented, that Mr. P. had not taken rather more care of him a little earlier in the day, which probably would have obviated the necessity of this *accouchement*.

^e Which redounds highly to the credit and the sympathy of the Melton gentlemen, and completely refutes a very ill-natured but groundless supposition, that their sensibility will ever suffer them to make a joke of any such heavy loss a gentleman may happen to sustain, especially if the gentleman likewise happens to be heavy himself, which, of course, doubles the weight of the misfortune.

^f As every *Country Gentleman* may not comprehend the force of this expression, he ought to know, that the Meltonians hold every horse that cannot “Go along a slapping pace,” “Stay at that pace,” “Skim ridge and furrow,” “Catch his horses,” “Top a flight of rails,” “Come well in the next field,” “Charge an ox fence,” “Go in and out clever,” “Face a Brush,” “Swish at a Rasper,” and, in short, “Do all that kind of thing,” phrases so plain and intelligible, that it is impossible to mistake their meaning! A horse is held in the same contempt in Leicestershire, as a coxcomb holds a country bumpkin. In vulgar countries (*i. e.* all others) where these accomplishments are not indispensable he may be a hunter!

And unless for all sorts of strange fences prepar'd,
 A man and his horse are sure to be scar'd.
 This variety gives constant life to the chase;
 But as FORESTER ^a says—"Sir, what KILLS, is the PACE."
 In most other countries they boast of their breed,
 For carrying, at times, such a beautiful head;
 But these hounds to carry a head cannot fail,
 And constantly too—for by George there's—no tail.^c
 Talk of horses, and hounds, and the system of kennel—
 Give me Leicestershire nags—and the hounds of OLD MEYNELL.

^a A gentleman who practically explains all the above accomplishments to the great edification of young horses, and the no less astonishment of weak minds!

^b A favourite maxim of Mr. Forester's, of the truth of which he seldom loses an opportunity of endeavouring to make his friends thoroughly sensible.

^c As heads and tails are not here to be understood in the common acceptation of the words; and as all ladies are not sportswomen enough to be aware that they have no reference to the human head or tail, they should know, that when you can "cover the hounds with a sheet," (which any Meltonian will explain to them more particularly) they are then said to carry a beautiful head; when on the contrary, they follow the leader in a line, like a flight of wild fowls, they are then said to tail.



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